



# What personal protective equipment to use and when: residential aged care

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update 23 July 2020

## Who should read this?

This factsheet is for staff and visitors in residential aged care facilities (RACF).

## When is hand hygiene required?

Hand hygiene should be performed using an approved, alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water and dry with a disposable towel:

- before entering the resident's room
- before touching a resident
- immediately before a procedure (e.g. doing a BSL)
- before putting on (donning) and after taking off (doffing) PPE
- immediately after a procedure or body fluid exposure risk
- after touching a resident (e.g. following personal care)
- after touching the resident's items or surroundings (e.g. after making a bed)
- after leaving the resident's room.

If hands are visibly soiled, wash them with soap and water.

## When to wear PPE

### Do face coverings need to be worn if there is no outbreak in a facility?

Yes, all staff and workers in RACFs are **required** to wear single use face masks (surgical masks), and follow this advice:

- perform hand hygiene before and after putting on the mask
- do not touch the front of your mask while putting it on, wearing it or taking it off
- the mask must cover the mouth and nose
- masks should not be worn for more than four hours
- masks should be changed before four hours if the mask is soiled, contaminated, damaged or damp
- if masks are removed, they must be immediately disposed of
- masks must be removed during breaks
- masks must not be pulled down to eat or drink or worn around the neck.

Staff must undertake a risk assessment as to whether other PPE is required when providing care to residents.

## Do face coverings need to be worn by visitors if there is no outbreak in a facility?

Visitors within restricted areas of metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, like other members of the community, are required to wear a face covering when they leave their house, this includes when they visit a RACF.

In other parts of Victoria, all visitors should wear a face covering while attending a RACF ([some exemptions apply](#)), due to the vulnerability of older Victorians to the virus.

All visitors must continue to practice physical distancing, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene within the RACFs.

Visitors are required to comply with any staff directions around PPE requirements while attending the RACFs.

If visitors do not have a suitable face covering, the RACF should consider providing a single use face mask for visitors to wear while visiting.

## Do masks need to be worn by residents leaving the facility if there is no outbreak in a facility?

Yes, in the restricted areas of metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, wearing a face covering when leaving your home is a requirement.






In other parts of Victoria, residents who are leaving a RACF may wish to wear a face covering for their protection. This is particularly the case if they are unable to physically distance.

## Do staff need to wear PPE when caring for or visiting the room of a resident who is not in quarantine or isolation?

Usual standard precautionary practices apply, including appropriately performing hand hygiene.

However, all staff and workers in RACFs are **required** to wear single use face masks (surgical masks) at all times.

**Table 1: PPE required when caring for or visiting the room of a resident not in quarantine or isolation**

When to do a risk assessment	 Hand hygiene	 Surgical mask	 Eye protection (glasses/goggles/face shield)	 Disposable gloves	 Disposable fluid repellent gowns
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities of daily living care (e.g. showering, continence care)</li> <li>Clinical care (e.g. wound dressings, medication management)</li> <li>Touching a resident's belongings or equipment</li> <li>Visiting a resident's room</li> </ul>	✓	✓	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions






- The type of interaction (activities of daily living, clinical care, etc) with a resident must be risk assessed to determine the likelihood of contact with the resident's blood or body substances, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or other potentially infectious material or equipment. Selection of PPE as part of standard precautions will vary and should be based on this risk assessment.
- Interactions that may generate splashes or sprays of blood and body substances require a mask and eye protection to be used.
- Personal eyeglasses are not adequate eye protection.

## Do staff need to wear PPE when caring for or visiting the room of an asymptomatic resident in quarantine?

All staff caring for or visiting the room of an asymptomatic resident in quarantine must wear PPE.

If residents need to leave the room, they should wear a mask (if tolerated).






**Table 2: PPE required when providing care for or visiting the room of an asymptomatic resident in quarantine**

When to use	 Hand hygiene	 Surgical mask	 Eye protection (glasses/ goggles/ face shield)	 Disposable gloves	 Disposable fluid repellent gowns
Caring for or visiting the room of an asymptomatic resident in quarantine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Do staff need to wear PPE when caring for a resident with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)?

All staff who enter the room of a resident who is in isolation with suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) must wear PPE at all times.

**Table 3: PPE required when providing care for a resident with suspected or confirmed COVID-19**

When to use	 Hand hygiene	 Surgical mask	 Eye protection (glasses/ goggles/ face Shield)	 Disposable gloves	 Disposable fluid repellent gowns
Caring for a resident with suspected/ confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

If residents need to leave the room, they should wear a mask (if tolerated).

**P2/N95 respirators** should be used only when required for aerosol generating procedures (e.g. nebuliser use). Staff should be trained on how to correctly use P2/N95 respirators. They should be fit checked with each use to ensure an adequate face seal is achieved.

## Is there a special way to put on (don) PPE?

Yes, the type and use of PPE varies based on the level of precaution required. Staff should receive training on putting on (donning) and removing (doffing) PPE. There is a specific sequence for putting on and removing PPE. For more information see [How to put on and take off your PPE \(PDF\)](#) poster.

## Is there a special way to dispose of PPE?

Yes, all used or contaminated PPE should be disposed of in clinical waste as per standard practice.

## Do visitors need to wear PPE?

Yes, visitors need to use the same standard precautions and wear the same PPE as staff. This means visitors should wear PPE if they are visiting asymptomatic residents in quarantine or residents with suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19).

All visitors are required to comply with any staff directions around PPE requirements while attending the RACF.

Staff must educate and help visitors to correctly put on and take off PPE.

Visitors within restricted areas of metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, like other members of the community, are required to wear a face covering when they leave their house. This includes visiting a RACF.

Visitors who are attending a RACF in other parts of Victoria, should also wear a face covering in the RACF due to the vulnerability of older Victorians to the virus.

If visitors do not have a suitable face covering, the RACF should consider providing a single use face mask for visitors to wear while visiting.

All visitors must continue to practice physical distancing, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene within the RACF.

## Where can I get more information?

For information about coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria, visit the [Department of Health and Human Services website](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus) <<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>>.

The Victorian and Commonwealth governments have developed coronavirus (COVID-19) aged care specific web pages with resources and guidelines.

The situation and action required is changing. We recommend you regularly check these websites and subscribe to updates.

### **Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria)**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for the aged care sector: [dhhs.vic.gov.au/aged-care-sector-coronavirus-disease-covid-19](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/aged-care-sector-coronavirus-disease-covid-19)

Victoria's coronavirus (COVID-19) daily update: [dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-update](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-update)

### **Department of Health (Commonwealth)**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for the health and aged care sector: [health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-aged-care-sector](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-aged-care-sector)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for people in aged care facilities: [health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/advice-for-people-at-risk-of-coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-in-aged-care-facilities](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/advice-for-people-at-risk-of-coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-in-aged-care-facilities)

Australian health alerts: [health.gov.au/news/health-alerts](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts)